

Community Sponsorship Alliance



Written by Rebekah Hester attending on behalf of The Pickwell Foundation

Reflecting on a Remarkable Gathering: The Community Sponsorship Alliance Event at the House of Commons

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Yesterday marked a momentous occasion as I had the privilege of attending an inspiring event at the historic House of Commons in London. The Community Sponsorship Alliance (CSA) hosted an event that brought together people from diverse backgrounds, united by a common purpose: to discuss and address the challenges faced by refugees seeking safe routes to safe homes, within safe communities.

Here, I reflect on the key moments and calls to action from this extraordinary gathering.

The event began with a warm welcome, as members of the CSA guided attendees through the doors of the House of Commons. The atmosphere was one of anticipation, with people eager to engage in meaningful conversations. As we mingled and enjoyed Middle Eastern snacks and mint tea, it was evident that we were part of something special.

Susannah and Ben, co-chairs of the Community Sponsorship Alliance, took the stage to set the tone for the event. They expressed their gratitude to Helen Hayes MP, who played a crucial role in making this event possible. Susannah Baker MBE and Ben Still shared the core principles of the CSA and highlighted the vital role it plays in representing the Community Sponsorship sector in the UK.



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Ben reminded us of the immense success of the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, which has welcomed over 183,600 people in just 18 months. However, the original form of Community Sponsorship remains equally important, with community groups coming together to sponsor families and support their resettlement. The CSA is committed to promoting this model and helping more refugees find safe routes to safe homes.



Khadeja Alamary, originally from Syria, shared her difficult journey to Jordan but then coming to the UK through Community Sponsorship. Her story was a stark reminder of the urgency and necessity of safe routes for refugees. She emphasised that the boats will keep coming until safe routes are made available, and her personal experiences underscored the life-and-death nature of this issue.

The CSA presented a comprehensive set of calls for action, each addressing a critical aspect of refugee welcome and resettlement, three of these asks were:

1. Safe Routes: Advocate for humanitarian routes for 'named' individuals and families alongside the UNHCR-selected route through the UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS).
2. Safe Homes: Review and update Local Housing Allowance (LHA) to match rising rental costs, offering social landlords incentives to provide affordable housing.
3. Safe Communities: Develop a national strategy for integration and resettlement based on learning from voluntary community organisations. Implement trauma-informed approaches and provide accessible resources.

A Collective Effort for a Brighter Future



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The event emphasised that creating safe routes, safe homes, and safe communities for refugees is a task for our Government and for all of us. It's a humanitarian mission that touches the lives of both refugees and the communities that welcome them. As the event came to a close, attendees were encouraged to support these vital initiatives and engage with the CSA's mission. Friendship bracelets were offered as a symbol of solidarity, reminding us to choose empathy, kindness, and compassion.

The Community Sponsorship Alliance event at the House of Commons was a powerful reminder that, as a society, we have the capacity to create change, welcome those in need, and build a future filled with compassion and understanding. It's a call to action for all of us to join hands and work towards a world where safe routes, safe homes, and safe communities are not just ideals but realities for those seeking refuge.

In the words of Khadeja, "If we want to know what humanity means, we need to look at you and the good people around you. You give us peace and love. You give us the hope and the vision for a new step in our lives."



Let us carry this vision forward and continue to support the invaluable work of organisations like the Community Sponsorship Alliance. Together, we can create a brighter and more welcoming world for all.



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